

Just which companies would get to claim Iraq's oil has been a subject of much debate. After a war, the contracts that Iraq's state-owned oil company has signed with European, Russian, and Chinese oil firms might well be abrogated, leaving the field to U.S. oil companies. "What they have in mind is denationalization, and then parceling Iraqi oil out of American Oil companies," says Akins. "The American oil companies are going to be the main beneficiaries of this war."

The would-be rulers of a post-Saddam Iraq have been thinking along the same lines. "American oil companies will have a big shot at Iraqi oil," says Ahmad Chalabi, leader of the Iraqi National Congress, a group of aristocrats and wealthy Iraqis who fled the country when its repressive monarchy was overthrown in 1958. During a visit to Washington last fall, Chalabi held meetings with at least three major U.S. oil companies, trying to enlist their support. Similar meetings between Iraqi exiles and U.S. companies have also been taking place in Europe.

"Iraqi exiles have approached us, saying, 'You can have our oil if we can get back in there,'" says R. Gerald Bailey, who headed Exxon's Middle East operations until 1997. "All the major American companies have met with them in Paris, London, Brussels, all over. They're all jockeying for position. You can't ignore it, but you've got to do it on the QT. And you can't wait till it gets too far along."

But the companies are also anxious about the consequences of war, according to many experts, oil-company executives, and former State Department officials. "The oil companies are caught in the middle," says Bailey. Executives fear that war could create havoc in the region, turning Arab states against the United States and Western oil companies. On the other hand, should a U.S. invasion of Iraq be successful, they want to be there when the oil is divvied up. Says David Long, the former U.S. diplomat, "It's greed versus fear."

Ibrahim Oweiss, a Middle East specialist at Georgetown University who coined the term "petrodollar" and has also been a consultant to Occidental and BP, has been closely watching the cautious maneuvering by the companies. "I know that the oil companies are scared about the outcome of this," he says. "They are not at all sure this is in the best interests of the oil industry."

Anne Joyce, an editor at the Washington-based Middle East Policy Council who has spoken privately to top Exxon officials, says it's clear that most oil-industry executives "are afraid" of what a war in the Persian Gulf could mean in the long term—especially if tensions in the region spiral out of control. "They see it as much too risky, and they are risk averse," she says. "They think it has 'fiasco' written all over it."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. OXLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. OXLEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CUBA BEGINS TRIALS OF DISSIDENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, let me draw your attention to a headline that appeared in the Associated Press today, and the headline reads "Cuba Begins Trials of Dissidents. Cuba pressed forward with its harshest crackdown on dissidents in years, holding the first trials Thursday for dissidents rounded up across the Island and reportedly seeking life sentences for at least 10 of them."

My colleagues, we are at this moment attempting to liberate Iraq from a dictator, Saddam Hussein. Our men and women are in harm's way. Regrettably, in this very Chamber, we have had our own colleagues, our own colleagues advocating open trade and opportunity with Fidel Castro.

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Mr. Speaker, I am referring to the very person who is arresting and charging and sentencing dissidents in Cuba to life sentencing. At least 78 dissidents have been arrested since March 18. If you dare to speak out against the government, and I say that loosely because it is not a government, it is a dictatorship, of Fidel Castro, you are arrested. My colleagues from south Florida will tell Members at length what is considered a chargeable crime, and they will tell some of the things that this dictator is charging his citizens with.

Let me read what Elsa Pollan said about her husband, Hector Fernando Maseda. She says, "I feel so defenseless. Where can I find someone to defend my husband?"

Her husband is going to be on trial, and no one will stand up for him. Why are our men and women in Iraq? To free and liberate people. And yet the very Members who voted to send our men and women into harm's way in Iraq, some of those people here on the floor gleefully say the embargo has not worked, 42 years later. Let us just trade with Cuba because if we embolden this dictator, he may give up and we will have freedom for people.

I have never heard such nonsense in my life. I hope those Members who advocate free trade with Cuba will look at today's headlines. If they feel comfortable doing business with a person who will incarcerate people for simply speaking their free will and their free mind, then have at it. I want no part of it.

If Members can look Elsa Pollan in the eyes and say her husband should be locked up for life because he spoke out against Fidel Castro, join with the happy campers in wanting to do free trade with Cuba. I challenge those Members who believe in free trade with Cuba, would they today, based on the political reality, advocate free trade with Saddam Hussein? Would they stand up in this well and say let us do business with Saddam Hussein because if he gets a little economic commerce, he will become a nicer person?

It is different because they keep saying if we do grain sales and medicine and food, we do opportunity, travel, somehow we are going to loosen the embargo and loosen Fidel Castro's grip on his people. Obviously, Fidel Castro has a different opinion on what loosening the grip on his people means. There are 78 people, confirmed defendants, and sentences sought for each. Several Cuban exile groups have distributed slightly longer lists. We are not sure. We hear 78 by the Associated Press. These are probably people who we will never hear from again because they will probably be dead at the hands of Fidel Castro's henchmen.

Mr. Speaker, tonight I ask my colleagues to carefully look at the headlines, think about our men and women in harm's way, and think if they really want to pursue a policy of appeasement with a man who is in fact locking up his own citizens as we speak. The parallels between Saddam Hussein and Fidel Castro are absolutely identical. One has a beard, one is south of Florida by 90 miles, the other is in the Middle East. But if the citizens dare speak out against either, they are dead or imprisoned for life. If they advocate health care or opportunity, they are arrested. Please do not fall for the trap; trade will not work. The embargo must stand. Fidel must go, and Cubans on that beautiful island south of Florida should have a chance for democracy and free elections.

CUBAN REGIME ARRESTS PRO-DEMOCRACY ACTIVISTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for at least half the time until midnight as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the remarks of the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and then my distinguished friend from Florida, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY),